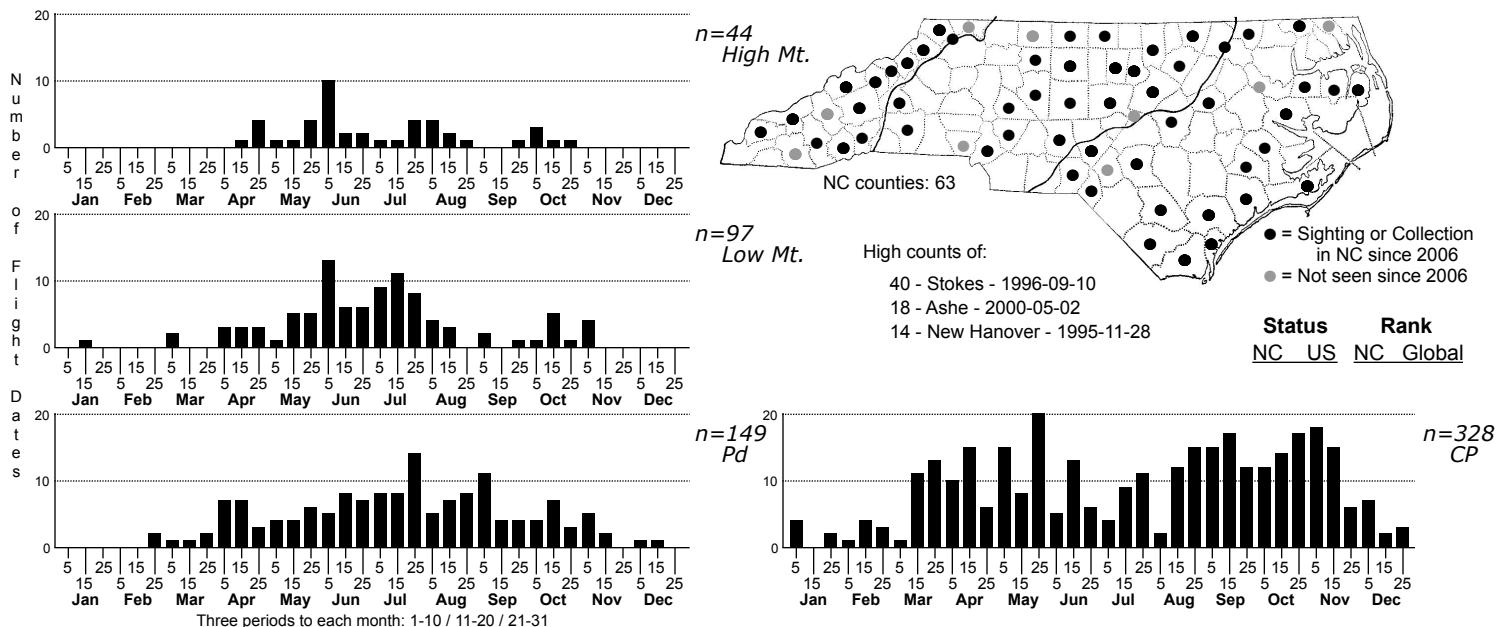


Zale lunata Lunate Zale



FAMILY: Erebidae SUBFAMILY: Erebinae TRIBE: Ophiusini

TAXONOMIC COMMENTS: One of 39 species in this genus that occur north of Mexico, 23 of which have been recorded in North Carolina

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS: Covell (1984); Beadle and Leckie (2012)

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Forbes (1954)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES: Forbes (1954), Wagner (2005); Wagner et al. (2011)

ID COMMENTS: Our largest Zale and one of the most variable in coloration and patterning. Several forms are similar to those of *Zale minerea* in particular, and also with *Z. galbanata* and *phaeocapna* to some extent. Best distinguished from those species by the greater waviness of the postmedian from the bottom of the cell to the costal margin: in *lunata*, a series of small waves or zig-zags are present in this area, including at the end of the cell (opposite the reniform), whereas in the other three, only a couple of broader undulations occur, including a deep concavity at the end of the cell (see Forbes, 1954).

DISTRIBUTION: Found statewide, from the Barrier Islands to the High Mountains; one of our most ubiquitous moths

FLIGHT COMMENT: Flies throughout the growing season over most of the state and is omnipresent in the Coastal Plain

HABITAT: Occurs in virtually all wooded habitats in the state, including maritime forests, peatlands, Longleaf Pine savannas and sandhills, river bottomlands, mesic-to-dry ridges, and high elevation forests. Wooded residential areas are also used in addition to natural forests and woodlands.

FOOD: Larvae are polyphagous, feeding on a wide range of woody species as well as some species of forbs. Wagner et al. (2011) specifically list chokeberry (*Aronia*), birch (*Betula*), hawthorn (*Crataegus*), apple (*Malus*), cherry (*Prunus*), blackberry (*Rubus*), willow (*Salix*), and *Wisteria*. In North Carolina, Jeff Niznik reared a larva from Black Willow (*Salix nigra*).

OBSERVATION METHODS: Comes moderately well to UV lights but numbers are typically much greater on bait, including at fruit baits and wine ropes.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: G5 SNR [S5]

STATE PROTECTION: Has no legal protection, although permits are required to collect it on state parks and other public lands.

COMMENTS: Given its wide range of larval host plants, broad habitat associations, and extensive occurrence across the state, this species appears to be secure.